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TECHNIQUES OF PROPAGANDA

With the existence of a revolutionary situation in the Philippines it becomes more imperative than ever for our Party to reach and to take leadership over even wider masses of the people. The mere existence of a revolutionary situation does not mean that it will develop of its own accord into a spontaneous revolution in which the people are ready to rise up and throw off the bond of their oppressors. Such a development is the result of both bold and patient work by the Party in clarifying issues and problems and making the people aware of them, in bringing to them the program of the Party, and in convincing them to accept the Party's leadership above and beyond all others who are vying for their support. One of the principal means we have of achieving this is through the medium of our propaganda.

Our program can be divided roughly into two different categories: 1) indirect propaganda not done in the name of the Party, conducted in mass organizations, among individuals and friends, and by taking advantage of the various bourgeois media; 2) propaganda conducted officially in the name of the Party, through literature or through Party spokesmen.

The first category is more subtle in nature and involves chiefly the use of psychology in playing upon the discontents, the suspicions, and the fears of people. This type of propaganda is chiefly useful in wakening people to the issues and problems that affect them and keeping those issues and problems always in the forefront of their minds. It is a matter, more or less, of breaking the ground and of preparing people for the implanting of more advanced ideas leading to action. Most often the effect is indirect, with people being led unwittingly to think along a line of suggestion. Most people are open to suggestion more than to direct challenge or appeal.

The main thing for our Party and for the IED is to be talked about, to be

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always in the peoples' eye and on the peoples' tongue. That is what the enemy fears. The enemy is afraid to teach Communism in schools, even in a distorted manner, because they know it would lead people to think about Communism and to ask questions. The enemy keeps insisting desperately, that there is peace and order, because they want to keep the peoples' attention away from the IIB and to keep people from thinking about the IIB organization. Our job is to see to it that the IIB is talked about constantly.

There are many ways of advocating the IIB without coming out in direct support of it. One can say, in the course of discussion, "You know, I don't blame the Huks for what they are doing" and it is enough to set people thinking.

Forums or discussion groups, which should be sponsored and advocated in all mass organizations, in schools, and even in neighborhoods, are excellent means of keeping issues and problems before the people. Outspoken supporters of our program are not essential in such a case, so long as our followers are able to influence the choice of topics and the choice of speakers in order to guarantee that the enemy shows up to the least advantage. Points in our program can be brought out indirectly through asking questions in the discussion period.

The classroom, for both teachers and students, is a key place where questions can be raised and where innumerable things can be interpreted, unofficially from the Marxist standpoint. In history, in economics, in political and social science, and in literature courses, historical and dialectical materialism can be employed, albeit subtly, with a very telling effect, particularly in shaping the outlook of students. It is quite possible to do this without the use of Communist phraseology, if it is wiser to avoid it. The student movement could and should be built in the classroom by convincing students intellectually of the superiority of Marxism and the Party program. In many schools there is still comparative freedom of discussion, and school newspapers often voice progressive ideas. It should be the objective of the student cadres to gain positions on editorial boards and to recruit editors of school papers, so that in editorial and feature columns of such publications, it is only a matter of concentrating on topics that are timely and by which people may be rallied for struggle.

Our propaganda, of course, directed as it must be to all different sections and groups of the people, must be flexible and adapted to the varying interests of the sections and groups. For example, let us take the question of import control. Import control is a measure taken by the Quirino administration to stabilize itself by preventing the outflow of dollar resources. Our Party, realizing that the failure of import control will lead to a further weakening of the Quirino administration and a further loss of faith in it by the people, must use its propaganda in such a way that import control will be discredited in the eyes of the people, and through it the Quirino administration as well. In the trade unions and among workers in general, we emphasize the fact that import control is causing what amounts to a cut in wages since food prices in the market are rising as a result of import controls. We also stress the fact that the Quirino administration is helping the profiteers. To small businessmen we point out that import control will force them out of business and that it favors the growth of big monopolies. Even among students and intellectuals we can emphasize the fact that import control is keeping books out of the country. It would be incorrect, however, to emphasize prices in the public markets to students and unemployment to small businessmen.

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As another example, let us take the case of American imperialism. How do we arouse people against American imperialism? To workers we point out that American imperialists keep their wages down, and we compare the difference between Filipino and American workers who do the same kind of work. To peasants we point how American imperialists kept the feudal landlords in power, and how workers are used as cheap labor to produce raw materials for American factories. To the nationalist bourgeoisie we point out how American imperialism restricts the growth of business. To students we stress the ideals of freedom and independence and the need for throwing off the colonial mentality. Our approach to the various sections of the people must be in terms of their interests, although the different approaches are only phases of the same issue.

In writing Party propaganda, whether it be a pamphlet, a leaflet, a statement, or a newspaper article, there are several important considerations to keep in mind:

First, there must be simplicity. Whether the piece of propaganda is primarily agitational or primarily educational it must be written in language that is easily understood by the widest possible number of people. The most important consideration in propaganda is not literary style, it is understandability. Words of one and two syllables should be used if the piece is written in English, and colloquial phrases, if it is written in Tagalog. Marxist phraseology, in many cases detracts from the simplicity of propaganda, particularly when one is appealing to politically undeveloped masses who do not understand it. Even the term "imperialism" is not really understood by most people. Until the moment when the masses have been educated politically by the Party, it is better that our propaganda, particularly the agitational variety, avoid the use of technical Marxist phrases, and use instead simple expressions which have meaning in terms of the peoples' experiences.

Simplicity of language must be accompanied by simplicity of idea and thought. The propaganda argument must be advanced by simple reasoning which is easily comprehensible to the ordinary worker. A Party leaflet or a Party newspaper is no place to advance complicated theoretical discourses; even when theory is explained in pamphlets or documents it should be written in simplified language. After all, the propaganda skill of our Party consists of the ability to translate the basic Marxist theoretical works into terms that fit the level of understanding of the masses.

The question of simplicity in propaganda extends to intellectuals as well as to workers and peasants. The interest of the intellectual is not such as to lead to an immediate enlightened outlook on political and economic theories. An elementary approach will be found to be as effective with them as with other sections of the people.

Secondly, our propaganda must be closely related to the experiences of the people. It must be adapted to fit the Philippine scene, and the elements of the peoples' existence. It is useless, for instance, to agitate the peasants about the cold war in Europe or about the necessity of recognizing Communist China; they must be approached on the basis of issues that actually affect them, for example the abuses of the Philippine Constabulary, the sharing of crops, and the appropriation of the feudal estates. At this stage we cannot approach the peasantry with propaganda for collectivization; that would be running too far ahead of the peoples' experience.

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The explanatory parts of our propaganda should be, insofar as possible, presented in the form of concrete examples drawn from within the range of experience of those to whom it is directed. If the propaganda is designed primarily for workers, it should express an acquaintance with the over-day problems of workers, on as well as off the job. It should show knowledge of the general economic and political issues that affect the working class. A leaflet on the international situation is less likely to catch the interest of the working class than is a leaflet dealing with specific working conditions in the industry in which they are employed. A skillful propagandist can describe the whole operation of capitalism through what goes on in a single factory.

Our propagandists must be able to put themselves in the place of those to whom they appeal and they must be able to imagine their thoughts and reactions. Propagandists must know the techniques which are likely to win the attention of those to whom they are appealing, and they must also have a sense of timing, and the ability to determine the correct psychological moment.

Part of the people's experience is their historical and revolutionary tradition. Our propaganda must be linked with them. Drive home a point with a quotation from a revolutionary leader. Quote Boni Ibarra and Rizal along with Marx, Lenin, and Stalin, and link them together so that the people can see the relation between their own revolutionary leaders and the revolutionary leaders of our movement everywhere. Show that the tradition of Boni is the same as the tradition of Lenin and Stalin, and of Tarcic. Use historical episodes and personalities to awaken the feeling of nationalism, and portray foreign domination. Do not use bourgeois leaders as examples nor quote from such imperialist tools as Luzon; use instead the heroes of our Party — Evangelista, Peleo, Vicente Lava and Joven. We must popularize our own leaders, and we must popularize the revolutionary episodes and traditions of our people. This must be one of the main considerations of our propaganda, in order to win the people away from bourgeois and imperialistic interpretations of national experience.

Thirdly our propaganda must point to a line of action. It is insufficient to expose the enemy and to explain how the enemy's system operates; we must also point out how the people can fight the enemy and the means by which the system can be changed. We must always show the people the alternative to what exists and how such change may be achieved.

The object of all our propaganda is to stir the people into action. This is particularly true of agitational propaganda, which must conclude with direct calls to action. However, it is also true of educational propaganda whereby arguments of our propaganda are explained more thoroughly. In both cases propaganda serves the purpose of implementing the Party program, and this can only be achieved through action.

This propaganda approach is as true in the case of small issues as it is in the case of large issues. It is as important to arouse people on the subject of the banning of Palma's books as it is to call upon them to rally around the armed struggle. The main objective is to get people in the habit of acting. In the Philippines, especially, the lethargy of centuries is prevalent among the people. In the United States, in France and elsewhere under the Party's guidance, the people pour into the streets over issues such as legislation. In the Philippines it takes almost intolerable conditions to lead the people into action. When they are goaded, it is true that they resort to revolutionary action, but we must seek short cuts in achieving this. No Party leaflet, pamphlet, statement or editorial should be issued without concluding with concrete demands, proposals, and step by step suggestions to the people.

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Much of the success of calling the people to action depends upon our ability to sloganize our campaigns, and to translate our Party program into slogans. Short, simple slogans which have punch, and are terse and to the point, are worth a page of rambling argument and exhortation. Brevity is a virtue that needs cultivation in our movement. Habits of speechmaking have led us to be somewhat verbose. We must learn to get to the point in our propaganda, and to keep it short. This is particularly true in the case of slogans. It is necessary for slogans to be eye-catching and able to capture the imagination of the people, as well as to sum up the need of the hour. Study the slogans of the Bolshevik Party in the Soviet Union on the eve of the revolution: "Bread, Peace and Law", "All Power to the Soviets". Our own slogans, built around the issue of peace have been effective in the past.

We must be careful to be specific in our slogans, and not to generalize too extensively. We must never say only "Down with American imperialism", we must point out the means by which it may be downed.

Another important point to remember in propagandizing an issue, is to concentrate on one issue, and not to allow it to become confused by dragging in other points. A leaflet attacking graft and corruption becomes confused if we also include slogans on the outlawing of company unions, or on the need for public toilets in Tondo.

The making of leaflets themselves is a technique that requires considerable attention. They must be attractive to the eye, as well as to the point. A cartoon should be included whenever possible, along with bold, well-spaced lettering and a dramatic slogan. A minimum of condensed argument should be included, followed by a series of slogans indicating how the issue can be dealt with. If we are hard-pressed for ideas on lay-outs of leaflets, we can always get ideas from bourgeois advertising techniques.

This document has been concerned mainly with written propaganda, particularly that issued in the name of the Party and the I.M.B. There are other types of propaganda that need to be considered as well. One of these is propaganda which may be advanced through the more literary technique of the short story, poetry, or literary criticism. Another is the creation of poster art, which has been used with good results in China and other countries. For the latter type of propaganda we need to recruit artists who can dramatize our struggle in pictures which tell a story. These suggest action more effectively than words. A third type of propaganda can be advanced by dramatic groups of the type used by the Counter Intelligence Division during the war. These dramatic groups can be used in the provinces to perform before the people, advancing our program by plays, skits, songs and poetry. All of these forms of propaganda need special treatment in documents.

It would be a mistake however, to think that the power of the word either printed or spoken, is the most effective form of propaganda. The most effective propaganda is always that of action. The activities of the I.M.B. are our best advertisement. One report of I.M.B. activity in the press, is worth a dozen editorial arguments. This is also true in trade unions and in all other mass movements. The organization of a strike, a picket line, a demonstration, a delegation or a petition campaign are all powerful forms of propaganda, not only for persons participating in them, but also for those who hear about or witness them. "Propaganda through action" should be a slogan which is always kept before our Party.

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* [REDACTED] Comment. This individual cannot be identified.

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